

# Community Relations Service



## Police-Community Conflicts

In communities where there is a lack of mutual trust and respect between law enforcement and minority communities, allegations of police misconduct, perceptions of racial profiling, excessive use of force, and other incidents can lead to compromised public safety and divisive developments that have a negative impact on communities, law enforcement agencies, and local governments. Conversely, building trust and nurturing legitimacy on both sides is a critical aspect of strengthening the relationship between citizens and the law enforcement agencies that serve them.

CRS supports local efforts to strengthen mutual trust and respect between police and communities by providing mediation, consultation, training, and facilitated dialogue services to help stakeholders understand underlying issues and concerns and develop mutually acceptable action plans and problem resolution measures.

## About the Community Relations Service

Created in 1964, the Community Relations Service (CRS) is the Department of Justice's "Peacemaker" for community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and disability. CRS is a conflict resolution agency that provides mediation, consultation, training, and facilitated dialogue services to help communities enhance their ability to independently prevent and resolve future conflicts. CRS does not investigate, prosecute, impose solutions, assign blame, or assess fault. CRS is required by law to conduct its activities in confidence and is prohibited from disclosing confidential information about cases in which it has provided services. All CRS services are provided to communities free of cost.

## How the Community Relations Service Can Assist Communities Experiencing Police-Community Conflicts

CRS can...

- ✓ Bring law enforcement representatives and community members in conflict together to discuss underlying issues and concerns related to allegations or perceptions of racial profiling, biased policing practices, and excessive use of force, and develop mutually-acceptable action plans for improving police-community relations;
- ✓ Develop and provide law enforcement agencies with cultural competency trainings, in support of officers and officials interested in establishing a better understanding of the practices and cultural norms of various communities, sharing words and behaviors that may be perceived as offensive, and assisting them in forming trusting relationships with the communities they serve;
- ✓ Support law enforcement agencies and community organizations in working with demonstration and protest organizers in developing contingency plans for events, making it easier for all involved to ensure safe and organized observances of citizens' First Amendment rights;
- ✓ Work with law enforcement, city officials, and community members to establish rumor control mechanisms to prevent the spread of false and inflammatory information; and
- ✓ Offer best practices and consultative support in the establishment of Police-Community Advisory Boards and other collaborative mechanisms that aid law enforcement executives and community leaders in managing conflicts and preventing future tensions.